

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
TO H. RES. 723
OFFERED BY MS. WILD OF PENNSYLVANIA

Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas the 2006 United Nations World Report on Violence Against Children galvanized many countries in their commitment to face the challenge of ending all violence, including sexual violence, against children in stating, “No violence is justifiable, and all violence is preventable.”;

Whereas sexual violence against girls is a domestic and international plague that spares no culture, country, race, religion, or ethnicity;

Whereas data from United Nations Children’s Fund indicate up to 50 percent of sexual assaults worldwide are committed against girls under 16 years of age;

Whereas sexual violence against girls and the lifelong consequences impede girls’ potential contributions to society and impact nations in the journey to self-reliance;

Whereas sexual violence against children and adolescents perpetuates intergenerational poverty through factors including increased school absenteeism, decreased years in school, and early childbearing;

Whereas sexual violence during childhood is associated with serious immediate and long-term health impacts including but not limited to higher rates of pregnancy, maternal mortality, suicide, depression, substance abuse, heart disease, obesity, and HIV/AIDS;

Whereas girls ages 15 through 19 have the highest risk of experiencing sexual violence and currently account for 75 percent of new HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa totaling 1,000 newly infected young women each day;

Whereas complications of pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death among girls 15 to 19 years of age in sub-Saharan Africa where 90 percent of adolescent pregnancies are associated with child marriage;

Whereas female genital mutilation/cutting (referred to in this resolution as “FGM/C”) can be recognized as sexual violence, is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women, represents a form of gender-based discrimination, and is an invasive procedure with no medical necessity;

Whereas sexual violence against children, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”), includes all forms of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and encompasses a range of acts, including completed nonconsensual sex acts (such as rape), attempted nonconsensual sex acts, abusive sexual contact (such as unwanted touching), and noncontact sexual abuse (such as threatened sexual violence, exhibitionism, verbal sexual harassment, and use of explicit images);

Whereas recognizing the need for data and evidence to guide actions to end violence against children, the CDC partnered with United Nations Children’s Fund (“UNICEF”), Swaziland (now Eswatini), and the Government of Eswatini to develop and implement the scientifically sound survey tool, Violence Against Children and Youth Surveys (referred to in this resolution as “VACS”);

Whereas VACS are nationally representative household surveys designed to define the magnitude, nature, and consequences of sexual, physical, and emotional violence among children and adolescents;

Whereas the governments of 22 countries including 14 African countries (Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) demonstrated leadership in addressing the pandemic of sexual violence against girls through the implementation of VACS with technical support from the CDC and coordination from multiple stakeholders including UNICEF, Together for Girls, and others;

Whereas the VACS core questionnaire was updated in 2017 to contribute to the measurement of several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals targets, including with respect to FGM/C;

Whereas VACS data from over 30,000 respondents in Africa revealed—

- (1) over 25 percent of girls and 10 percent of boys experienced sexual violence before the age of 18 years;
- (2) for 1 in 4 girls, their first sexual intercourse experience was forced or coerced;
- (3) the most common perpetrators of sexual violence are people known to the victims;
- (4) only about half of the victims of childhood sexual violence report the incident;
- (5) fewer than 10 percent of assaulted girls and 7 percent of assaulted boys sought care services and received them;

(6) 1 of 3 girls who experienced unwanted sex became pregnant before the age of 18 years; and

(7) sexual violence against children and adolescents was associated with a 370-percent increase in the incidence of HIV infection, a 350-percent increase in the incidence of unwanted pregnancies, and a 200-percent increase in attempted suicide;

Whereas country-specific survey data from VACS were analyzed by scientists at the CDC and presented to the government-led, public and private multi-stakeholder, in-country team to catalyze the formation of the individual nationwide action plans;

Whereas the formation of data-driven action plans utilizes INSPIRE, a World Health Organization technical package of proven strategies to reduce violence, including—

- (1) implementation and enforcement of laws;
- (2) norms and values;
- (3) safe environments;
- (4) parent and caregiver support;
- (5) income and economic strengthening;
- (6) response and support services; and
- (7) education and life skills;

Whereas INSPIRE guided action plans resulting in significant progress in strengthening protection for youth included—

(1) in response to a 38-percent prevalence of childhood sexual violence among girls, the Government of Eswatini drafted the first law in their country making sexual abuse of minors illegal;

(2) several countries used the data to improve services for victims by establishing advocacy centers

where health, legal, and social services could be accessed;

(3) countries such as Tanzania and Nigeria, where violence in schools was noted to be high, developed policies, codes, and protective guidelines for teachers and schools; and

(4) reforms in Uganda, including expansion of the “No Means No!” program to 20,000 adolescent girls and implementation of the “Coaching Boys into Men” program, contributed to a significant decrease in the incidence of rape;

Whereas the follow-up VACS household surveys thus far completed in Kenya and Zimbabwe, revealed a significant decrease in sexual violence among children and adolescents after data-driven reforms were instituted;

Whereas sexual violence, common in the United States and around the globe at times of peace, occurs with increased incidence in settings of conflict, migration, internal displacement, and institutionalization, where it is known to be used to intimidate, subjugate, and instill fear;

Whereas survivors in these adverse settings commonly experience collective abandonment and an entrenched impunity of their perpetrators; and

Whereas the strong association between experiencing violence in childhood and later perpetrating violence highlights the importance of comprehensive interventions for both survivors and perpetrators: Now, therefore, be it

Strike the resolved clause and insert the following:

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

1 (1) condemns sexual violence against girls, as it
2 remains a devastating global health, human rights,
3 and economic problem that is both unjustifiable and
4 preventable and that impedes peace and security;

5 (2) applauds the leadership of African countries
6 using data-driven, in-country, government-led, multi-
7 sector reform to end sexual violence against girls;

8 (3) urges all countries to put into place proven
9 methods and tools such as VACS, a proven house-
10 hold survey tool, and INSPIRE, an evidence-based
11 technical package of strategies, to generate and im-
12 plement government-led, data-driven, comprehensive,
13 multi-sector response plans to end sexual violence
14 against girls;

15 (4) remains deeply concerned by the prevalence
16 of sexual violence and calls on all countries to ad-
17 dress the United Nations Sustainable Development
18 Goals including goal 16.2, “End abuse, exploitation,
19 trafficking and all forms of violence against and tor-
20 ture of children”, goal 5, “Achieve gender equality
21 and empower all women and girls”, and goal 5.3,
22 “Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early
23 and forced marriage and female genital mutila-
24 tions”;

1 (5) recognizes the need to fund further research
2 on the global magnitude, scope, consequences includ-
3 ing health, social and economic burdens, and preven-
4 tion of sexual violence among all children, including
5 more vulnerable populations such as children who
6 are disabled, institutionalized, or homeless, children
7 living as refugees or internally displaced persons,
8 and children living in areas of conflict;

9 (6) values the adaptation and application of the
10 VACS technique in humanitarian contexts to acquire
11 relevant data for analysis to drive planning;

12 (7) encourages—

13 (A) the establishment of multidisciplinary
14 and integrated systems in every country to en-
15 sure that laws are put into place to protect girls
16 and that these laws are enforced by a trained
17 and supported criminal justice system; and

18 (B) domestic use of the proven survey and
19 technical tools VACS and INSPIRE to address
20 sexual violence against girls in the United
21 States;

22 (8) emphasizes the need for increased global
23 and domestic efforts to eliminate FGM/C; and

24 (9) supports the establishment of safe, survivor-
25 centered spaces and advocacy centers for coordina-

- 1 tion of health, psychologic, and other services for
- 2 survivors and their families.

